Outlook

Molewood Residents' Association



Photo courtesy of Barry Goodey DroneShots

Spring Edition 2024 Please see our website www.molewood.org.uk for up-to-date information

Chair's message from Emily White

Welcome to the latest edition of The Outlook. All of us on the committee hope that 2024 has been good to our residents so far.

We are aware however, that there continues to be frustration that the potential Durkan development north of their existing The Stiles site has still not come forward to East Herts District Council planning committee for a decision on the future of this area.

Molewood also seems to be experiencing an increased level of crime with a recent spate of thefts from and of vehicles. Our local officer PC James Parker has kindly provided some advice on how to prevent vehicle crime/ theft, and will be attending our AGM to discuss further any issues or concerns you may have.

As ever we are extremely grateful to Ben Crystall for his commitment to providing an informative update for this newsletter – despite his increase in responsibilities and the challenges of leading East Herts District Council.

You will also see the results of the Christmas lights competition further down. Very well done to our winners who get to donate £25 to a charity of their choice. There is something quite magical about Bengeo's illuminations at Christmas, thanks to the great efforts made across the whole estate.

I hope to meet several of you at our social evening in May, but as always please let any of the committee know if you have any specific matters you would like us to consider. Our committee details are at the end of the newsletter, or you can email us on **enquiries@molewood.org.uk**.

Emily White, Chairman

Residents' Social Evening

Please join us for a social evening to incorporate our AGM on Thursday 23rd May at 7pm at Bengeo Primary School. There will be pizza and prosecco and you can meet fellow residents, the MRA committee and your local councillors to socialise and discuss neighbourhood issues.

Membership Payments

Membership payments are now due for 2024. It is a £3 annual fee and all the funds collected go towards the work of the MRA in supporting local projects. To pay, you can do one of the following:

- Scan the QR code and follow the on-screen instructions
- Transfer to our bank account - account no 18411010, sort code 60-10-39 with your house number and road as reference
- Pay cash direct to Alan Sewell, the Treasurer or to the person who delivers your Outlook using the slip on the last page

We are very grateful for your support.

Report from our local councillor, Ben Crystall



Hello and a very belated happy new year!

Traffic and Roadworks: Sacombe Road/Bengeo Street roundabout: The long-overdue repairs to the mini-roundabout have finally been completed!

Please all take extra care at this roundabout, as there have been a few near misses with drivers nearly hitting cyclists/ other cars. Slow down and take a second look before proceeding. If you do have an incident here, please let me know.

North Bengeo Street: In January I met with Highways and a designer from contractor WSP to discuss plans for a proposal to help tackle pavement parking and speeding along the northern half of Bengeo St. The original designs were prepared in 2022 (!) yet despite best intentions, there has clearly been a miscommunication between Hertfordshire County Council and its contractors, hence the need to prepare fresh designs. The Highways teams are genuinely doing their best, but in my experience it's a case of too few staff trying to co-ordinate too many projects. Whatever the reason, apologies - I know people want action on Bengeo Street and I dearly want to get this scheme out to resident consultation and hopefully implemented asap. (With Highways projects, two years seems to be the typical time needed to go from design to implementation.)

Sacombe Road: I am still pursuing an advisory 20mph School Safety Zone for Sacombe Road and will update the MRA when I hear more.

Durkan Development (HERT4): I have no news on when HERT4 is expected to go before the District Council Development Management committee. Any delay is likely due to objections from both the Environment Agency (see 26 Sept on the planning portal) and from Hertfordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (see 1 Dec). The Environment Agency's headline reason is that it needs reassurance about levels of groundwater contamination, stating that the applicants "must provide adequate information to demonstrate that the risks posed by development to groundwater can be satisfactorily managed." Meanwhile the Lead Local Flood Authority also objects on the basis of the absence of supporting information and asks that the issues it raises "are adequately addressed".

Durkan's consultants responded with 4 documents (published online on 23 January). Presumably this information is now with the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority for consideration and we'll see if they remove their objections. Clearly any development there brings a finite risk and ultimately, the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority have to decide what level of risk is "acceptable", and what measures are "adequate". It is also vital to hear the views from our own local expert (Dr Bryan Lovell from The Avenue) on whether the proposed measures are sufficient, given the field's specific geology and the risk to clean drinking water in a region that's set to run short.

Grants/Funds: With Hertfordshire County Council struggling financially, my own locality budget has been halved from £10,000 to £5,000. I'm keen to continue supporting the MRA and other good causes in Bengeo, but it's important that the community also accesses other sources of funding such as grants for sustainability projects from Town, District and County councils. Perhaps the MRA or residents would be keen to develop such a proposal.

Contact: If you have ideas for new projects that can improve our area, or need ongoing support, please get in touch by emailing me directly at **ben.crystall@hertfordshire.gov.uk**.

Best wishes, Ben



Picture courtesy of Barry Goodey

Save Bengeo Field Campaign Update



In December 2023, the Save Bengeo Field campaign presented to the full Council of the East Herts District Council (EHDC) a petition to protect Bengeo Field from further housing development, and to return it to Green Belt.

The HERT4 site was allocated for housing in the District Plan on condition that quarrying for minerals took place before any housing was built. However, plans for a quarry were turned down by Herts County Council and a subsequent appeal against the decision was dismissed by the government.

Bengeo councillor Alex Daar (Green Party) supported the petition, saying: "From the time I moved to Bengeo 25 years ago, I have walked across Bengeo Field regularly and during lockdown almost daily. I completely get the request from local residents for this land to be returned to the green belt."

Durkan's planning application for an additional 118 homes beyond Bengeo Nursery/The Stiles has been submitted to EHDC and both the Environmental Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority have expressed their objections. Durkan responded and we assume EHDC is reviewing further clarifications received. The next step will be the meeting of the EHDC Development Management Committee, which will make the decision about the planning application. Provisional dates are 6th March or



Photo courtesy of Sarah Mason-Fellows

10th April at 7pm. We hope many residents will be able to join this meeting in EHDC, Pegs Lane – please look out for updates on our website and Facebook group. You can find more information on Facebook: Love/Save Bengeo Field, website: **https://savebengeofield.org.uk/** or email Aśka Pickering on **askawp@gmail.com**.

Please take a few minutes to complete the Bengeo Field Survey 2023/2024 which you can find here: https://uk.surveymonkey.com/r/3QRPSTK. This will enable us to provide data for the discussions around Bengeo Field amenity.

Bengeo Primary School – Outstanding!

I am Justine Page, the headteacher at Bengeo Primary School. This is my third year in post here. I have previously been a head teacher at another local school in Hertford, and I have been a teacher for more than thirty years.

From the first time I visited Bengeo School I loved it and knew this is where I wanted to work.

I have been thrilled to get to know the school community better and I love the children here. We work hard to make sure they have a voice at the school, and they love to share their thoughts and opinions and know that we will listen to them. The staff team here are committed and hardworking and a joy to work with. Our lovely governors are dedicated to making sure our school is the best it can be, and we have a supportive and engaged parent body. It has been a pleasure to engage with them all.

In September 2023, we were inspected by Ofsted and graded 'Outstanding' in all areas. This is a cause for great celebration amongst the community. I read somewhere



that outstanding is a mindset not a destination, and that resonated with me.

We all strive to be outstanding every day, doing what we do with integrity and heart. The report says that we have "a culture of high expectations and kind relationships" and I think this is the perfect summary of our school. I believe what makes us outstanding is the consistency of our approach to everything, our inclusivity and our passion. In this we are supported by an amazing community. I am very proud to be the headteacher of this school.



Bengeo Community Garden Project

Following the enthusiastic response of residents to the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan, a small group of volunteers has been working on improving the green area on the corner of Tower Street and Duncombe Road. They are working closely with experts and EHDC to finalise the plans for the garden and are hoping to make considerable progress this year. If you would like to get involved or find out more, please contact them on Facebook: Bengeo Community Garden or email them on **askawp@gmail.com**.

333 Bus Service Discontinued

The 333 bus service that covered Bengeo, and which has been running since the 1920s, has been replaced by the H5 and H6 busses.

As you all know from previous Outlooks, for many years the 333 bus service has been close to being discontinued due to low passenger numbers, most recently in 2016.

The old service ran between Pinehurst and Bengeo, via the town bus station. The new service will only run between Bengeo and the town bus station, whilst Pinehurst will receive their own service. As before, the H5 and H6 busses will run twice an hour Monday to Friday, and hourly at the weekends.

Many people will have fond memories of the 333, with "I Love Hertford" recently presenting Cristina, the 333 bus driver, a community award due to the many positive messages from passengers.



Photo courtesy of Barry Gray

The new timetable can be found at bus stops, on the Intalink website, and a pdf can be found at **https://passenger-line-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/intalink/service/a697641d-b98c-4214-a25a-5f867329cc17-timetable-20240107-335d0d9a.pdf.**



Bulb Planting

A big thank you to the small, but intrepid group of planters who arrived on the Green opposite the shops on the 7th October to plant a selection of bulbs. Unfortunately, due to the ground being so hard after such a dry September, we were not able to dig holes deep enough to plant the bulbs. The plan is to take pictures this Spring of where the current bulbs are and to arrange another planting day in October to fill in the gaps. We will keep you informed of the date and hope that more of you will come along and make the Green full of colour for the following Spring.

Message From Our Local Police Officer, James Parker



I am PC 566 James Parker your local officer for Bengeo. I work in the newly renamed Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) stationed at Hertford Police Station. The name change aligns the force to the College of Policing and other forces in the country.

I have been in the NPT Police Constable role since October 2023, but my Police career started in 2009 when I joined as a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) and worked in the borough of Broxbourne. At that time, I was a resident of Hertford and Bengeo living on Wellington Street, but I have since moved to Bragbury End. In 2014 I joined the British Transport Police stationed in London as a Police Constable and was involved in many high-profile events that took place in London at the time. In 2017 I transferred back to Hertfordshire Constabulary stationed in Hertford, where I worked in the Response Policing team dealing with all the 999 calls. I have held that position until my move to NPT in 2023.

I have the following updates to give on the concerns below raised by Bengeo residents:

Vehicle Crime: The recent vehicle crimes seen in the area are opportunist criminals that go around checking door handles to see what small items they can steal.

Here is some advice on how to prevent vehicle crime:

- Lock your vehicles and double check you have done this.
- Take anything valuable out of the vehicle when not in it i.e. golf clubs, laptops and tools etc.
- Any items left in the vehicle should be placed in glove boxes or covered areas, so that they are not visible.
- Try and park vehicles under good lighting or consider security lighting and possibly doorbell cameras.
- For residents with keyless entry cars, try and place these in a faraday bag as this blocks the signal to the car, or place the keys away from the front of the house.

Potential Selling of Cars between Sacombe Road and the Wick: I am aware of the residents' concerns here and am monitoring the situation. The potential offence being committed is driving a car without insurance, or the Council can remove a vehicle if it is without tax or MOT.

Speeding in 20mph zones:
I will be conducting speed gun patrols in these areas, but I have also started to conduct school patrols at Bengeo Primary school due to the abuse the poor school crossing lady receives from drivers exceeding the 20mph limit.

Just to note that anyone parking on the yellow zig zags outside the school will incur a penalty of 3 points on their driving licence and a £100 fine. If they continue to offend, this could lead to the possible seizure of their vehicle for causing an obstruction.

I am happy to attend your social evening on Thursday 23rd May to further discuss residents' issues and concerns. You can contact me directly via email on **james.parker@herts.police.uk**, or for those that do not have access to the internet call 101 to create a log and book a visit.

Charity: Future Living

Future Living Hertford is a charity for Domestic Abuse victims and survivors based at the bottom of Port Hill, which in 2021 was honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service - the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

The charity supports men, women and children who are survivors of domestic abuse and those in recovery from addictions, by offering a diverse range of holistic projects. For more information you can visit their website on **https://www.futurelivinghertford.co.uk/**, or call them on 01992 537 344.





Christmas lights' winners

Great Christmas light displays across all of the Molewood area this year. After a lot of deliberation, the winners were;

Andy and Amanda White of Desborough Close - £25 to Leukaemia Care.

Sandra Temple of Buckwells Fields (Children's Category) 2nd year running! £25 to The British Hedgehog Preservation Society.

Bengeo Primary School – Lollipop Lady

You may recognise the lovely Bengeo Primary School 'lollipop lady' Nina Boyd from our 2015 Spring edition of Outlook, when she first started to patrol the school crossing. We catch up with Nina eight years later ....

What is the best thing about your job?
The kids! Each and every one of these kids is my baby...

What is the worst thing about your job?
The rain!

I know you regularly experience aggressive and threatening behaviour from drivers – what is being done about this?

Due to the increase in speeding and aggressive behaviour, I now have a camera attached to the front of my uniform which flashes every time something happens and goes directly to Police live CCTV. I am the first crossing patrol officer in Hertfordshire to have one.



Just a reminder to all drivers that speed limits are there for a reason – to save lives. So please slow down and respect those that are trying to protect the young and their carers.

Local Events

Bengeo Coffee Pot:
Pop-up café in Duncombe Road Church Hall to raise funds for local charities. Thursdays, 10.30am-12pm.

Free Bereavement Café:
Drop-in session to meet and chat with others who have been through a bereavement. 1st Wednesday and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Secret Garden Café, Bengeo. Weds – 2.30-4.00pm, Thurs – 6.30-8.30pm

Local Health walks
Why not come and join us on a free Hertfordshire Health group walk, led by trained volunteer leaders? You'll meet some great people and see the beautiful countryside surrounding Bengeo. This is when they go:



Local Events Continued

- Tuesday mornings 10am at The Avenue Green for a 3-4 mile walk at a comfortable speed, followed by coffee at The Secret Garden café.

- Wednesday mornings 10.15am for a 45 min walk around the Hartham area, meeting by the fountain in Salisbury Square.

- Thursday mornings 10am at the Sele Farm shops for a 30 min walk, followed by coffee at Simmons or the Community Hub afterwards.

The weekly walks will only be cancelled in extreme weather. You will see the leaders at the start of each walk wearing their yellow high viz jackets. Come and join them! **https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/doc/env/hhw/2024-01/east-herts-health-walks-timetable-jan-to-april-2024.pdf**

If you would you like to become a volunteer Health Walk leader, please call the Health Walks Team at County Hall on 01992 555888 or email **healthwalks.cms@hertfordshire.gov.uk**. The next training day is in Stevenage on the 12th of April.

Bengeo Parish Church Hall, Duncombe Road:

Mondays:
Keep Fit, Church lunches twice monthly, Brownies

Tuesday:
Hertford Adult Learning Group, U3a Tai Chi, U3a Simply Fit, Bounce

Wednesday:
Craft Club monthly, U3a Ukulele Band, WI monthly, Move it, Tiger Cheer

Thursday: Bengeo Coffee Pot, U3a Pilates, Evening Pilates

Friday:
Morning Pilates

Saturday:
Dance school, Children's parties / Family Celebrations

Sunday:
Bounce, Children's parties / Family Celebrations

If you would like to book the hall, please ring Wendy on 01992 589538

Local businesses

Wednesday Market:
Bakery stall outside the White Lion pub, Wednesdays 9am – 11am.

Good News:
6.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, 7.30am – 4.30pm Saturday and 8.00am – 12.00pm Sunday

The Secret Garden Café:
Open 8:00am- 2pm, Tuesday to Saturday.

Headlines:
Is open from 8am on Tuesdays – Fridays. Check their website for more details **https://headlineshertford.co.uk/**

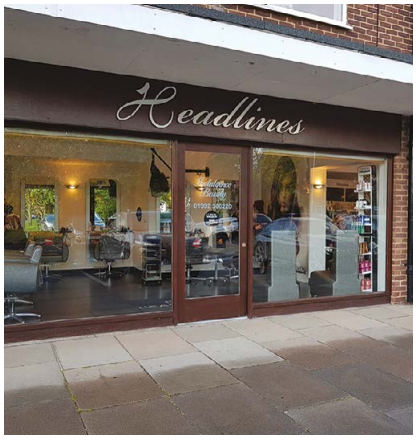
Walton Lodge Vets:
Is open 9am- 5pm Mondays to Fridays

The Avenue Pharmacy:
Is open 9am - 6pm every weekday and 9am - 1pm on Saturday









The Avenue Pharmacy:

Saran and his team at The Avenue Pharmacy are part of the new NHS Pharmacy First scheme. After an initial assessment, they will be able to supply prescription-only medicines [usual costs will apply], including antibiotics and antivirals where clinically appropriate, to treat seven common health conditions without the need to visit a GP. These are: sinusitis, sore throat, earache, infected insect bite, impetigo (a bacterial skin infection), shingles and uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women aged 16-64 years. The scheme was launched on 1st February.



MRA Committee meeting

Our next two committee meetings are on: 18th April 138 Cowper Crescent, and 23rd May at Bengeo Primary School.

Your Outlook is printed by:
Mobile Stationery & printing center limited
Unit 10 Hartham View Industrial Estate
Hartham Lane, Hertfordshire, SG14 1QN

Your Association

The Molewood Residents' Association was formed in the late 1960s and represents residents of the Molewood estate, Bengeo. This is the area north from The Drive and west of Bengeo Street and Sacombe Road. The aim of the association is to support Molewood residents and contribute to community events and projects.

The association issues 2 to 3 Outlook newsletters annually which are delivered and saved down onto our website. If you have any old copies, documents or photos of the estate, we'd love you to share them.

The annual membership of Molewood Residents' Association costs £3 per household a year.

The Committee always welcomes new members! If you Interested in local affairs and can spare a few hours every 6-8 weeks to attend a meeting with like-minded residents, please get in touch by emailing us at **enquiries@molewood.org.uk**

Committee details

Chair: Emily White ..... 27 The Drive
Treasurer: Alan Sewell ..... 16 The Avenue
Secretary: Kath Richardson ..... 138 Cowper Crescent
Editor: Jess Chan ..... 124 Cowper Crescent

General Members

Nick Gough ..... 11 Lys Hill Gardens
Marie Archer ..... 55 The Wick
John Edwards ..... 8 The Wick
Rachel Ogier ..... 23 Trinity Grove
Aska Pickering ..... 168 Sacombe Rd
Mark Harley ..... 76 Buckwells Field
Chris Simmons ..... 6 The Wick
Linda Pryor ..... Lys Hill Gardens
Catie Geering ..... 46 Buckwells Field

Website Manager:
Paul Ogier

Outlook Design:
Jim Martin

If you want to support MRA complete the slip and put it through the letter box of our treasurer, Alan Sewell, 16 The Avenue.

Please tick appropriate boxes below

☐ I/we want to support the Molewood Residents' Association for 2024.
☐ I/we have paid our subscription by electronic banking *(details highlighted above)* or
☐ I enclose my £3 per household payment for this year's subscription

My/our name is.....

and I/we live at.....

I/ we would be happy to be contacted by email about local issues by the residents' association so here is my email address:

.....